

# County of Los Angeles

## Implementing “Green” Purchasing



Purchasing & Contract Services  
Internal Services Department

# IMPLEMENTING “GREEN” PURCHASING IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY



## **The Genesis for a Countywide Policy**

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- National and Statewide Energy Conservation and Environmental Initiatives
- County Board of Supervisors Policy Adopted on January 16, 2007, establishing a Countywide Energy & Environmental Committee to develop:
  - Countywide Energy & Environmental Programs;
  - Energy Conservation Programs;
  - Environmental Stewardship Program, including a Countywide policy for the purchase of Environmentally preferable (Green) products.

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## **Purchasing Policy Objectives**

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Consistent with the Board's initiatives, the objectives of a Countywide Purchasing Policy would be to:

- Conserve natural resources;
- Minimize environmental impact;
- Support recycling markets;
- Reduce materials that are put into landfills;
- Encourage manufacturers and suppliers to reduce environmental impacts in their production, packaging and distribution systems

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## Where to Start?

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Existing Purchasing Policies include limited green requirements (e.g., recycled paper, toner cartridges, energy star criteria) for a decade. To develop a more comprehensive policy would require extensive research.

- o Internet research
- o Leveraging expertise and information from other organizations (EPA, US Communities, CSAC, CCGSDA, etc.)
- o Leveraging expertise and information from agencies with successful programs (Alameda County, CA; King County, WA; City of Santa Monica, CA; etc.)
- o Interaction with experts in green product standards and certification criteria.
- o Interaction with existing vendors on green product initiatives and offerings.

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## The Next Step

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Once the research phase was completed, the County moved to:

- Meeting with the other organizations and agencies with the expertise in the implementation of green purchasing policies.
- Acquiring specific expertise (in the form of consulting services) in the area of green product certification criteria and implementation experience of agencies of similar size to LA County.
- Leveraging existing suppliers to bifurcate and report on their respective green product offering to the County.
- Developing a phased approach to implement green purchasing on a Countywide basis.

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## Consultant Services

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The County enlisted Green Seal to assist with:

- Analyzing the County commodity agreements to identify high-volume/high-usage items where alternative (green) products could be used.
- Researching and providing specifications for green products whether or not 3<sup>rd</sup> party certification exists.
- Prioritizing solicitations for green products consistent with the agreement periods and/or County initiatives.

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## Existing Supplier Interaction

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As an example of this interaction, the County met with and relayed its green initiatives and requirements to Office Depot, who had:

- Developed a separate catalog consisting of only their green product offering under the LA County/US Communities contract;
- Accomplished a full analysis of the LA County spend on office supplies, identifying that we already purchase more than 14% of recycled/green products; and
- Identified an additional 553 items with available green alternatives to increase the percentage above 20%, and the associated cost increase (\$64K on a \$6 million volume).

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## **Developing a Policy Framework**

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Given the size of Los Angeles County government (e.g., 102,000 employees in 40 different County departments), the primary objectives were to develop a policy that could be:

- o Effectively Communicated
- o Understood
- o Implemented
- o Monitored
- o Measured
- o Reported



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## **Developing a Policy Framework**

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The foundation for the Policy would be designed to include:

- The purpose and reason for the Policy.
- The immediate impact; and the overall objectives (i.e., a road map) of the Policy.
- Defining the County's standards and requirements.
- General and specific responsibilities of County departments and employees.

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## **Policy Implementation**

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- Marketing Policy plan for County departments.
- Highlights on immediate successes.
- Established specific Purchasing team to evaluate product categories, specifications, and prepare solicitations in concert with end users.
- Purchasing Policy roll-out in June 2007.

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## Post Implementation Progress

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- 30% Recycled-content paper only on agreement.
- Recycled toner cartridges on agreement. BOS policy to use remanufactured toner where available.
- 30% recycled-content trash bags and liners on agreement.
- Evaluating an unpatented 100% compostable content trash bag offering.
- BOS policy of non-Styrofoam use at all County offices and buildings. Developing replacement alternative (biodegradable) products for food and beverage containers in County facilities (Jails, Cafeterias, etc.)
- Leveraging US Communities contracts for the purchase of “green” certified cleaning and office supplies and energy efficient electrical supply products.
- Working with the major computer manufacturers to replace Styrofoam packaging with recyclable materials.
- Adopted ePEAT standard for computer product purchases (exceeds previous Energy Star standard).
- Mandated purchase of Hybrid sedans for non-emergency County departments.

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## Summary

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In conclusion, the implementation of the Policy communicates that:

- Every County department is responsible to ensure that their respective employees, contractors, and vendors are fully aware and supportive of the County's initiative to purchase environmentally preferable goods and services.
- To this end, departments are responsible to exercise due diligence in their procurement decisions as well as procurements made by their contractors and consultants, promoting the purchase and use environmentally preferable products whenever cost effective, and to the extent practicable for all work completed on behalf of Los Angeles County.

# Conclusion of Presentation

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